

## Zoe Lofgren

1947–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

DEMOCRAT FROM CALIFORNIA

1995–



Image courtesy of the Member

**A FORMER HOUSE AIDE TO A JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MEMBER** during the impeachment hearings of President Richard M. Nixon, Zoe Lofgren eventually sat on the same panel as a Member when it weighed articles of impeachment against President William J. Clinton. With a long background in south Bay Area politics, Lofgren's legislative focus includes high technology interests and legislation to protect mothers, children, and immigrants.

Zoe Lofgren was born on December 21, 1947, in San Mateo, California, to Milt Lofgren, a truck driver, and Mary Violet Lofgren, a Machinists Union secretary and school cafeteria cook. Lofgren attended Stanford University on a scholarship, graduating in 1970 with a B.A. in political science. She earned a J.D. from the Santa Clara University School of Law in 1975. From 1970 through 1978, Lofgren worked for U.S. Representative Don Edwards. She married John Collins and has two children. Lofgren was elected to the Santa Clara County board of supervisors where she served from 1981 to 1994.

In 1994, when Representative Edwards announced that he would not seek re-election, Lofgren entered the Democratic primary for his seat representing San Jose and the Silicon Valley. She centered her political platform on improving the lives of children through education, welfare, and healthcare reforms, while stressing her middle-class and maternal credentials. Her campaign made national headlines when, in April 1994, the state declined her request for her occupation to appear as "county supervisor/mother" on the primary ballot. She eked out a two-percentage point win in a heated primary and in the general election, Lofgren won handily with 66 percent.<sup>1</sup> In her subsequent five re-election bids, Lofgren faced no serious challenges winning by margins from 66 percent to 73 percent.<sup>2</sup>

When Lofgren took her seat in the 104th Congress (1995–1997) in January 1995, she received assignments on the Judiciary Committee and the Science Committee. In the 105th Congress (1997–1999), she also accepted a seat on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. Lofgren served on all three panels through the 107th Congress. In the 108th Congress (2003–2005) she left the Standards of Official Conduct Committee to take a seat on the newly created Select Homeland Security Committee and was also appointed to the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. At the start of the 109th Congress (2005–2007), she took a seat on the Committee on House Administration, leaving the Science Committee. Lofgren is also a longtime member of the Democratic Committee on Organization, Study, and Review. Since 2003, Lofgren has served as the elected chair of the 33 Member California Democratic Congressional Delegation.

In Congress, Lofgren devotes much of her time to advocating for the high-tech industry, which employs many of her constituents. She is well-known in high tech policy circles for her co-sponsorship of the Safety and Freedom Through Encryption Act, her successful bipartisan effort to decontrol encryption technology and her sponsorship of the Public Domain Enhancement Act, which attempted to improve the nation's copyright laws. In 1997, Lofgren was a key supporter of "e-rate," providing Internet access to schools and libraries. In 2002, she introduced the Digital Choice in Freedom Act, which extended protection to buyers of copyrighted digital material while spurring technological innovation.<sup>3</sup> In the 109th Congress, she played a key role in the fight to protect net neutrality, introduced the BALANCE Act protecting consumer's rights to fair use, and helped to create the House Democrats' "Innovation Agenda."

Immigration law is another area of Lofgren's expertise. She has introduced several pieces of legislation relating to immigration, including a bill to provide automatic citizenship for Amerasian children, a bill to ease the adoption process for foreign children adopted by U.S. citizens, a bill to improve the way U.S. immigration services handle foreign children who arrive at the borders with no parent or guardian, and legislation to ease the visa process for foreign reporters who currently face many obstacles to enter temporarily into the United States.

Lofgren has emerged as a voice of opposition to much of the GOP-controlled House's welfare and social legislation. She supports women's reproductive rights, opposing the Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2001 and introducing an amendment which imposed stiff penalties on persons who commit acts of violence against pregnant women.<sup>4</sup> In 2005, she introduced the successful Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, which created new domestic violence funding provisions. On education matters, Lofgren opposed school vouchers and legislation that sought to deny public education to illegal immigrants.

#### FOR FURTHER READING

*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*, "Zoe Lofgren,"  
<http://bioguide.congress.gov>

#### NOTES

- 1 Mike Cassidy, "Lofgren Wins Easily for Congress," 9 November 1994, *San Jose Mercury News*: 10EL.
- 2 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://clerk.house.gov/members/electionInfo/index.html>.
- 3 *Congressional Record*, House, 107th Cong., 2nd sess. (2 October 2002): 6932.
- 4 *Congressional Record*, House, 107th Cong., 1st sess. (24 April 2001): 1594; *Politics in America*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2003): 98–99.